

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 19, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

CANADIAN SECURITY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

1991 PUBLIC REPORT

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages and under Standing Order 32(2), copies of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service public report for the year 1991.

I would ask that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General.

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ORDER IN COUNCIL

NOMINATION AND REFERRAL TO STANDING COMMITTEE

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table, in both official languages, a nomination recently made by the government and, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 110(2), it is deemed referred to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture.

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NATIONAL SECURITY

ANNUAL STATEMENT

Hon. Doug Lewis (Solicitor General of Canada): Mr. Speaker, a year ago the government announced that the Solicitor General would begin in 1992 to make an annual statement to Parliament on national security.

[*Translation*]

I am pleased to deliver the first such statement today.

[*English*]

In my remarks I want to address three dimensions of national security: first, the changing international environment; second, the security intelligence challenges that Canada faces in the current period of international transition; and, last, the government's firm commitment to safeguard fundamental liberties while assuring Canadians their security.

• (1010)

Canadians today are engaged in an important debate on our country's future. We have before us decisions on some of the most fundamental questions that people can ask themselves. We are privileged to have institutions such as this and traditions of public consultation which allow us to consider these questions in an informed and democratic way.

We are privileged in another respect as well.

[*Translation*]

For the first time in a generation, we can consider our future without also having to worry about the cold war.

[*English*]

We have entered a new era in the affairs of nations. The cold war is over. The iron curtain is gone. The Soviet Union has disintegrated. Countries of central and eastern Europe are finding their own paths. It is a time of hope and expectation. Canadians share these hopes and we have pledged to do everything that we can to bring them to fulfilment.

But we know from history that periods of international transition are also periods of potential danger. In recent months the long list of regional conflicts has grown longer, with the outbreak of fighting in Yugoslavia and in parts of the old Soviet empire. Dictators still impose their will in many parts of the world, practising terrorism against their enemies and scheming to acquire even more sophisticated weapons.